

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 AID-05 IGA-01

OMB-01 MC-02 L-02 /067 W
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R 251251Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4230

INFO USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 4935

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, ET, US

SUBJECT: NEED FOR EARLIEST DELIVERY OF F-5A AIRCRAFT

REF: ADDIS 4916

1. SUMMARY. CONSIDERABLE DISMAY AND SOME ACCUSATIONS OF BAD FAITH HAVE RESULTED FROM MAAG NOTIFICATION TO GOE THAT F-5A'S WILL BE AVAILABLE "DURING FIRST OR SECOND QUARTER OF FY 76". THESE HAVE BEEN BROUGHT FORCEFULLY TO ATTENTION OF CHIEF MAAG BY MINISTER OF DEFENSE (REFTEL) AND ALSO TO AMBASSADOR BY SAME MINISTER, WHO REQUESTED AMBASSADOR'S HELP IN ADVANCING DELIVERY DATE. END SUMMARY.

2. MINISTER OF DEFENSE TOLD AMBASSADOR DURING CONVERSATION TODAY THAT FONMIN FIFLE HAD REPORTED BY TELEGRAM FROM WASHINGTON IN FEBRUARY THAT HE HAD BEEN ASSURED THAT F-5A'S WOULD BE AVAILABLE "IMMEDIATELY" FROM IRAN. NOW TO HEAR THAT DELIVERY IS SUBSTANTIALLY DELAYED HAS CAUSED SERIOUS NEW QUESTIONS TO BE RAISED WITHIN DIRG (HE SAID "AT HIGHER MILITARY LEVELS") ABOUT BAD FAITH AND UNRELIABILITY OF USG IN MILITARY SUPPLY FIELD. MOD WARNED THAT GOE STRONGLY BELIEVED IN IMMINENCE OF SOMALI ATTACK THIS SUMMER, AND THAT ABSENCE OF AIR DEFENCE WAS MATTER OF GREAT CONCERN. NOW TO LEARN THAT EVEN F-5A'S WHICH HAD BEEN "PROMISED" EARLIER WOULD NOT ARRIVE IN TIME, ON TOP OF INDICATIONS THAT
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F-5E'S WOULD ONLY BE AVAILABLE MUCH LATER, ALONG WITH VERY LATE

DELIVERIES OF RADAR AND VULCAN CANNON, HAD LEFT VERY BAD IMPRESSION. HE STRONGLY URGED AMBASSADOR TO SEE IF DELIVERY DATE COULD BE ADVANCED.

3. AMBASSADOR SAID HE WOULD PASS ALL THIS TO WASHINGTON TO SEE IF THERE COULD BE EARLIER AVAILABILITY OF F-5A'S, BUT CAUTIONED MOD NOT TO BE OPTIMISTIC. AMBASSADOR ALSO TOOK STRONG EXCEPTION TO ANY "PROMISE" OF IMMEDIATE DELIVERY, AND SAID THAT WHILE HE DID NOT WANT TO HAVE ANY ARGUMENTS WITH FONMIN KIFLE, HE HAD BEEN PRESENT AT WASHINGTON CONVERSATIONS AND KNOW OF NO BASIS FOR ANY PROMISE OF IMMEDIATE AVAILABILITY. IT WAS TRUE THAT A HOPE RPT HOPE HAD BEEN EXPRESSED TO KIFLE OF DELIVERY BEFORE THE GOE-IMPOSED JUNE DEADLINE BUT NO ASSURANCES OR PROMISES HAD BEEN MADE.

4. COMMENT: WE ARE INCLINED TO TAKE QUITE SERIOUSLY MOD'S STATEMENTS ABOUT REACTION WITHIN DIRG ON RECEIPT OF WHAT THEY CONSIDER VERY BAD NEWS. AS DEPT KNOWS, MOD IS INTELLIGENT CIVILIAN WHO CAN BE VERY FRANK ABOUT HIS OWN PROBLEMS WITH DIRG AND WITH DIFFERING VIEWPOINTS REPRESENTED THEREIN. REGARDLESS OF MERITS OF GOE EVALUATION OF SOMALI INTENTIONS, GOE IS VERY UPSET ABOUT USG INABILITY TO DELIVER A NUMBER OF END ITEMS WITHIN THE TIME FRAME GOE BELIEVES NECESSARY.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: REQUEST RE-EXAMINATION OF WHATEVER PROBLEMS EXIST IN GETTING EARLIEST RELEASE OF F-5A'S FROM IRAN, WITH VIEW TO THEIR RESOLUTION. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AIRCRAFT ARE PHYSICALLY AVAILABLE IN USABLE CONDITION NOW, AND COULD BE FLOWN HERE BY ETHIOPIAN PILOTS AS SOON AS PAPERWORK IS COMPLETED. BECAUSE OF USG INABILITY TO BE COMPLETELY RESPONSIVE IN OTHER WAYS, THIS MATTER HAS ASSUMED CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE. EXPEDITED INTRODUCTION OF THESE AIRCRAFT INTO ETHIOPIA IS THEREFORE STRONGLY RECOMMENDED, HOPEFULLY IN MAY OR JUNE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PROCUREMENT, MILITARY AIRCRAFT, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ADDIS04935
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750146-0292
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750414/aaaaamsn.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 ADDIS 4916
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 AUG 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <26 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEED FOR EARLIEST DELIVERY OF F-5A AIRCRAFT
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, ET, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006